

MAR 1952

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 SECURITY INFORMATION
 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 INFORMATION FROM
 FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT

CD NO.

STAT

COUNTRY Hungary

DATE OF
INFORMATION 1952SUBJECT Sociological - Youth movement, DISZ
Political - IndoctrinationHOW
PUBLISHED Daily newspaper

DATE DIST. 17 Aug 1953

WHERE
PUBLISHED Budapest

NO. OF PAGES 4

DATE
PUBLISHED 1 Jul 1952

LANGUAGE Hungarian

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

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PARTY WORK AMONG HUNGARIAN YOUTH

Summary and Comment: The following is a summary of an address given by Gen Mihaly Farkas, Minister of Defense and member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers Party, at a meeting of the Central Committee at Budapest 30 June 1952. The address deals largely with the current problems of DISZ (Dolgozo Ifjak Szovetsege, Federation of Working Youth), the membership of which is composed of young people between the ages of 14 and 24.

General Farkas' criticism discloses that the great majority of DISZ members in the rural areas, the universities, the secondary schools, and the industries is either hostile or indifferent to the present regime. He finds the situation among the pupils of grammar schools more favorable to the party.]

The importance of the new generation in building socialism is increasing and requires a thorough study of the political changes which have taken place among youth. Hungarian youth is no longer the same as 8-10 years ago or even as late as 1945-48, that is, before the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The change is shown by the fact that Hungarian working youth is devoting itself in increasing numbers to the task of socialist building. This is true primarily of youth working in the factories, but applies also to a large cross section of peasant youth and students. However, it would be a great mistake to assume that everything is in the best order on the youth front, since it is undeniable that in the mentality of Hungarian youth many shortcomings which cannot be glossed over still exist.

It is true that those between the ages of 14 and 24, who constitute the membership of DISZ, were only 7-17 years old at the time of liberation and are therefore less exposed to the poisonous traditions of the past than the older generation. However, the capitalist classes in Hungary have not yet been completely liquidated. There are still kulaks, independent peasants, and petits bourgeois, and their children have been brought up in the anti-social morality of the parents' class. Even youths working in industry have

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not been separated from these strata and many young men of 20-24 years are still influenced by a nationalistic, clerical education. It would be the gravest mistake to underestimate these difficulties and to stop fighting against the lack of discipline, the irresponsible attitude toward work, and the cynicism in the ranks of youth. Also it is often necessary to fight against anti-Semitism and nationalism.

The situation is far from satisfactory in the morality, especially the sexual morality, of youth. Even students of working-class and peasant origin have drifted away from the working masses and are susceptible to cosmopolitanism and to Western manners, such as dances and clothing. Such antisocial phenomena as selfish materialism, an irresponsible attitude toward learning, and lack of stamina in overcoming difficulties are also frequent among youth. The present Hungarian youth is self-indulgent, lacks endurance, displays a compromising or submissive attitude in difficult situations, and is contaminated by the enervating influence of pacifism.

The work which DISZ has performed is, in general, unsatisfactory largely due to the failure of the Hungarian Workers Party to realize the importance of this youth organization. The growth and activities of DISZ have also been seriously hindered by a high rate of turnover in officials, as well as by excessive bureaucracy. The Central Committee of DISZ has become isolated from the membership and its members usually neglect for months to visit the megye, jaras, town, or factory committees.

The activities of the Central Committee consist largely of mailing stacks of circulars and attending an enormous number of committee meetings. For example, 42 Central Committee resolutions were sent to the megye committees between 1 January and 6 June 1952. The megye committees implement these resolutions by issuing their own resolutions to the jaras committees. However, once the resolutions have been mailed, they are usually forgotten, and no attempt is made to see that they are put into effect.

It is noteworthy that the DISZ membership is composed almost exclusively of youth between the ages of 16 and 20. Youth over 20 years keep aloof from DISZ, because its political, educational, and cultural activities do not meet their needs. The fact that a large percentage of DISZ officials are 16-21 years old also deters youth over 20 years of age from membership. To remedy this unsatisfactory situation, the Political Committee of the Hungarian Workers Party issued a resolution in February 1952, stating that it will maintain control over the DISZ and will assign a more mature leadership personnel to it. This personnel would be composed of men and women between the ages of 24 and 26, who have completed their party training. In implementing this resolution, the Political Committee assigned over 3,000 party members to the DISZ up to 6 June 1952. However, the DISZ was not sufficiently prepared to carry out the resolution of the Political Committee and the tasks assigned to the new leaders were indefinite. As a result, a large number of the party delegates subsequently quit the DISZ.

The defects described above are largely due to the failure of the Hungarian Workers Party to support the DISZ consistently and in detail rather than in generalities. Without exception, party resolutions dealing with the DISZ are vague and the party organizations still deal with the problems of youth movements in campaign fashion.

In regard to the attitudes of youth toward its socialist responsibilities, working youth as a whole has failed to become a shock brigade of production and its attitudes are far from satisfactory. Labor discipline among the working youth is substandard and the proportion of youth among Stakhanovites is very low. In mining, for example, there are only 210 youth among a total of 2,017 Stakhanovites.

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Apprentice training is characterized by low standards in instruction and poor results, despite the fact that 60,000 apprentices have been equipped with uniforms and numerous training shops and apprentice homes have been established. Responsibility for this unsatisfactory situation rests to a great extent on the DISZ, which has failed to devote attention to apprentice organizations. Another disquieting fact is that many apprentices are dropping out. Currently, 60 percent of the apprentices are of working-class origin and 30 percent are of peasant origin, with only 10 percent recruited from the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Although most of the apprentices come from the most enlightened strata of youth, they are still influenced by bourgeois ideology and education, which is hostile to the working class.

Despite these shortcomings, youths employed in industry are increasing their activities in socialist building. Youths in the rural areas, on the other hand, are definitely backward. Peasants and peasant youths are not permitted to form trade unions. Moreover, it is unwise to admit large numbers of peasant youth to party membership. The DISZ, however, does not have this restriction and is therefore the only agent of the party which has the responsibility of propagandizing the peasant youth. Nevertheless, scarcely 17 percent of the DISZ membership is composed of peasant youth. It is vitally important, therefore, that the composition of the DISZ be reorganized by increasing the number of peasant youth to 40 percent of its total membership.

Currently, the rural DISZ organizations resemble cultural associations more than militant, indoctrinating party organizations. Educational work in regard to the producers' cooperatives is extremely weak. The rural DISZ groups in the villages even undermine the DISZ groups in the producers' cooperatives. Since the village groups usually are equipped with cultural and sports facilities, the DISZ groups in the producers' cooperatives frequently disband and join the village groups. The situation is somewhat better on the state farms; but here, too, labor discipline, indoctrination, and party work are extremely weak.

The second weakest field of DISZ activity is the schools, particularly the universities and other institutes of higher learning. Political education and attitudes in the universities are generally very unsatisfactory and most students of worker or peasant origin labor under the misconception that they "are making sacrifices for the people's democracy by studying at the universities." Internationalism and the spirit of patriotism are very weak among the students. On the other hand, cosmopolitanism and admiration for the West are prevalent among the students. The attitude of many university students toward national defense and the people's army are also very unsatisfactory; as a result, many university students decline to enter the army voluntarily to become officers. Pacifism is strong among the university students. "What need for the army when we are fighting for peace?" and "Scientific research rather than a military career" are examples of hostile opinions disseminated at the universities by reactionary elements which the DISZ fails to oppose.

The situation is somewhat better in the secondary schools, although similar symptoms exist there, also. These unfavorable attitudes at the universities and secondary schools are due to the fact that the indoctrination of the students has been neglected by the DISZ.

A much more favorable situation prevails in the grammar schools, because of the Pioneer Movement. The activity of the Pioneer Movement consists entirely of educating children between the ages of 6 and 14 in love for the party, Comrade Rakosi, Comrade Stalin, and the USSR, encouraging the children to study, and strengthening school discipline. Educational work among the children has been greatly supported by institutions outside the schools. Currently, 11,400

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children are organized in special groups in 12 Pioneer houses; 5,000 children are working in 250 technical and Michurin stations; and over 18,000 children are members of 780 airplane-modeling associations.

In conclusion, the most important tasks in connection with the youth movement may be summarized as follows:

1. The most important task is to assign party members to leading posts in the youth organizations throughout the country. This is particularly necessary in the DISZ, whose officials have failed to understand the directing function of the Hungarian Workers Party.
2. The DISZ must extend its sports and educational activities to meet the needs of youth.
3. The number of party members in the DISZ must be increased.
4. Bureaucracy in the DISZ must be curtailed.
5. The number of Stakhanovite youth must be increased.
6. A larger number of peasant youth must be admitted to membership in the DISZ.
7. Bourgeois mentality, including chauvinism, clerical influence, pacifism, cynicism, lack of discipline, and lack of vigilance, must be fought.

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